

# 3.5 THE PERSIAN WARS

AND SLAVERY

# SLAVES IN GREEK SOCIETY

- Conditions varied greatly
- Household slaves vs slaves working in the mines
- Slaves were property, could be treated humanely depending on owner
- At the discretion of the owner, they were allowed to marry, have a home, and have children

# SLAVES IN GREEK SOCIETY

- Slaves were an important part of the Greek economy because they filled every occupation except for the government

# THE PERSIAN WARS

## GREECE UNITES IN CONFLICT

- Persians (where)
- Compared with the huge Persian empire, the Greek city-states were tiny
- Even a coalition that included every Greek city-state would be no match for the Persians
- Greek states were weakened by fighting amongst themselves and rarely agreed on anything long enough to act together.

# THE PERSIAN WARS

## GREECE UNITES IN CONFLICT

- On the positive side, Greek soldiers were tough and their battle tactics and weapons were inferior to none
- In 559 BCE a great King and general rose to the throne of Persia.....Cyrus the Great
- Cyrus gained power and continued to expand the Persian empire west of the Mediterranean

# THE PERSIAN WARS

## GREECE UNITES IN CONFLICT

- Unable to secure a peace treaty with the Persians, the Greeks tried to fight off the Persians
- They were unable to cooperate amongst themselves long enough to achieve any success

# THE PERSIAN WARS

## THE BATTLE OF MARATHON

- In 490 BCE, Darius, the new King of Persia, sent a fleet with about 20 000 soldiers to punish Athens for helping fight against the Persians
- The Persian fleet sailed to the eastern coast of Attica where a sheltered beach and a small plain provided a perfect base for the Persian Army.
- The plain was called Marathon

# THE PERSIAN WARS

## THE BATTLE OF MARATHON

- The Athenians, sent a professional messenger (“all day runner”) to Sparta, 250km away pleading for help
- He returned 4 days later saying that the Spartans would only come after the full moon (which was still a week or more away)
- So the Athenian citizen army of 9000 warriors went alone to Marathon to battle the Persians



# THE PERSIAN WARS

## THE BATTLE OF MARATHON

- Eventually, the only help to arrive was less than a thousand soldiers from Plataea, a close neighbor to the North.
- The Greeks in their heavy armor charged the Persians who then started to retreat back to their ships
- The Persians had been beaten back but it's empire was far from destroyed

# THE PERSIAN WARS

## GREEK COOPERATION DEFEATS PERSIA

- 10 year break from battles with the Persians after the battle of Marathon
- Then in 480 BCE, the new Persian king crossed the narrow strait between the Greek mainland and Asia Minor
- Herodotus (Greek historian) says that the Persian army consisted of 1.7 million soldiers, and with the fleet, cavalry and other attendants they numbered close to 5 million

# THE PERSIAN WARS

## GREEK COOPERATION DEFEATS PERSIA

- As is common with the ancient writers this number was vastly exaggerated
- Army probably consisted of 200 000 soldiers
- The Greeks had done little to prepare themselves for another attack and many of them simply indented to accept Persian domination without resistance

# THE PERSIAN WARS

## GREEK COOPERATION DEFEATS PERSIA

- Athens had used money from a new strike of silver at its mines to build a strong fleet of 200 ships, and gathered with Sparta for a congress to plan their defence against the Persians
- In the end it was decided to defend a narrow pass in central Greece called Thermopylae
- A small force of 4000 soldiers led by King Leonidas of Sparta and his bodyguards of 300 were sent to hold the pass until the full Greek Army arrived

# THE PERSIAN WARS

## GREEK COOPERATION DEFEATS PERSIA

- The Spartan stand was heroic but a local Greek shepherd betrayed the Greeks by showing the Persians a path around Thermopylae in the mountains
- Leonidas and about 1000 soldiers who refused to escape the Persian trap died fighting bravely.
- The Persian Army then headed south to Athens and took revenge on the city for its defeat at Marathon